बी.एस.एस. — Bakhar Sanshodhan Sangraha

BHARAT SATYA SAMPURNA · HISTORICAL RESEARCH DOSSIER

Geo-Strategic Importance of Forts in Swarajya

Defensive Architecture & Water Management in the Maratha Fort System

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः। तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम॥

Bhagavad Gita 18.78 — invoked as this dossier's guiding verse

TIER 2 · SECONDARY SCHOLARLY SOURCE

Source: Raju Chatarsing Pardeshi, "Geo-Strategic Importance of Forts in Swarajya," *Shivcharitra Pushpanjali Khand-2* (Special Issue, Vol. 13, No. 2, June 2024), ISBN 978-81-963502-0-8, pp. 113–123. Akhil Bhartiya Shri Shivcharitra Sahitya Sammelan — Nutan Maratha Mahavidyalaya, Jalgaon & Itihas Prabodhan Sanstha, Maharashtra.
Prepared for the Bharat Satya Sampurna (BSS) research archive.

२ Strategic Positioning & the Fortification Campaign

Forts formed the backbone of Swarajya's socio-political and military framework — functioning simultaneously as defensive bastions, administrative centres, symbols of sovereignty, and instruments of regional control. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj recognised that the rugged Sahyadri terrain itself could be turned into a natural fortress, and built a network of forts that fused indigenous Marathi construction methods with elements drawn from Islamic and European military architecture.

Entrances were the most heavily defended point of any fort. Gateways such as Raigad's Maha Darwaja were built with multiple layers of defence — spiked doors to deter elephants and battering rams, drawbridges, and guard chambers positioned to observe and control all traffic. Walls and bastions, raised from locally quarried basalt and reinforced with earthworks, formed the primary barrier against assault, while watchtowers scattered across each fort gave sentries panoramic sightlines to detect an approaching force early and coordinate its defence.

३ Water Management Systems of the Forts

A fort's capacity to withstand a prolonged siege depended chiefly on its water security. Maratha engineers designed sophisticated systems of tanks, reservoirs and aqueducts, built from basalt rock and lime mortar, to capture and store monsoon rainfall.

Channels and sluice gates regulated distribution for drinking, cooking and irrigation, while aqueducts carried water across considerable distances from mountain springs down to a fort's inner chambers. This hydraulic infrastructure meant a well-provisioned fort could hold out for months, denying an attacking force the advantage of starving it into surrender.

> **Key features:** rainwater-fed tanks & reservoirs · lime-mortar basalt construction for minimal seepage · sluice-gate distribution networks · long-span aqueducts from spring sources · documented at Raigad, Sinhagad, Pratapgad and other forts.

§ Tier Classification & Source Note

Tier 2 — Secondary Scholarly Synthesis

This dossier synthesises material from Raju Chatarsing Pardeshi's 2024 conference paper, which is itself a secondary academic work drawing on established published histories (Sarkar, Sen, Bendre, Mujumdar, Kulkarni and others cited in its bibliography). No new primary archival documents are introduced in the source paper. Within the BSS evidence framework it is classified Tier 2 — a credible, citable scholarly synthesis, but distinct from Tier 1 primary-source material such as original documents, inscriptions, or contemporary letters.

Selected References (as cited in the source paper)

1. R.C. Dhere & Joshi, *P.S. Adnyapatra*, Bora and Company Publishers, Mumbai, 1960.
2. S.N. Sen, *Military System of the Marathas*.
3. P.V. Kate, *Marathyancha Itihas*, Kailash Publications, Aurangabad, 1999.
4. R.C. Mujumdar, *The History & Culture of the Indian People — The Maratha Supremacy*.
5. J.N. Sarkar, *House of Shivaji*, Calcutta, 1940.
6. V.C. Bendre, *Biography of Shri Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj*.

Compiled for the Bharat Satya Sampurna archive — continuing the research trail of the family's handwritten diaries.